

Graduate Division

Sent March 11 (~1:30 p.m.)

Subject: UPDATE: IMPORTANT GRADUATE DIVISION GUIDANCE: Educational Activities During COVID-19 Outbreak

Dear Graduate Faculty, Staff, and Students,

The recommendations around COVID-19 are evolving rapidly, with the cancellation of in-person classes at dozens of institutions of higher education in the Bay Area and across the country. We agree with the leadership of these universities that more proactive measures are warranted to mitigate the pace of COVID-19 spread.

As a worldwide leader in biomedical research and healthcare delivery, UCSF must model best practices in public health. Additionally, we want to protect the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. Therefore, the Graduate Division is issuing this updated guidance on educational activities. The five professional degree programs are issuing similar guidance for their educational communities. This guidance is effective as of tomorrow, March 12, and will remain in effect until April 15 or until further notice.

I. Classes, exams, research, other educational activities, and co-curricular programming:

A. Scheduled didactic or discussion-based instruction and activities should move entirely to remote instruction, including exams if possible. The campus has increased *Zoom* bandwidth and purchased a new institutional subscription to *PollEverywhere*. *Notability* is an affordable tool used for annotating slides and pdfs.

To assist those who are new to working remotely, IT services has provided a guide for accessing email and phone while off campus: it.ucsf.edu/how_do/remote-work-resources.

To assist you in using educational technology solutions effectively, the Library and Educational Technology Services (ETS) have put together a list of platforms and guides: tiny.ucsf.edu/keepsteaching. Staff in both units are available to assist you as needed, but please take the time to carefully review these resources before seeking their assistance.

B. Essential curricular, in-person activities: We are aware that there are some activities that are essential for students to progress toward the timely completion of their degree program and that cannot be moved to remote instruction. Examples may include hands-on training to use complex equipment or some high-stakes exams. **We ask you to restrict gatherings to no more than 25 individuals.** Consider moving activities to larger rooms, or splitting cohorts between multiple rooms, and remind participants to practice good hygiene and social distancing.

C. Laboratory research: Please follow the March 9 guidance provided by the Office of Research (attached). For graduate students and postdocs,

- Assess experimental priorities to identify non-critical activities that trainees can perform remotely, such as computational analysis, writing papers and grants, etc.
- Identify critical activities that must be performed on-campus such as animal care or experiments that cannot be postponed. Take extra steps to ensure good hygiene and social distancing. Be sensitive to trainees who may not feel comfortable taking public transportation to get to lab.

D. Optional or co-curricular activities (e.g., journal clubs, seminars): These are non-essential for progress toward degree completion. Please hold these events by Zoom or consider postponing or canceling them, even if these activities are in small groups. Where possible, we want to minimize unnecessary trips to campus.

E. Social activities: We strongly recommend that happy hours and off-campus social gatherings be restricted, consistent with measures taken on campus to reduce opportunities for viral transmission.

II. Travel guidance

University resources for international and domestic travel are restricted to essential activities only, per the campus safety notice #4, issued on March 6. We recommend against all non-essential work-related travel regardless of funding source. Essential activities are limited to field research critical to degree progression and must be approved by the Graduate Dean. **All conference travel is considered non-essential.** In accordance, the Graduate Division travel award for students will be temporarily suspended.

We strongly recommend that students postpone or cancel all personal international travel. All should be aware that the situation is rapidly evolving. If the governments of destination countries or the United States take steps to limit travel or impose quarantine, travelers may find themselves stranded, and UCSF will not be in a position to assist them.

III. Additional information

Grad Slam has been postponed. The finalists, judges, and all volunteers have been informed. We will reschedule Grad Slam at a later date with the same set of 10 finalists, so that we can celebrate their work and the work of all of our PhD students as a community.

Weekly meetings for graduate program directors and administrators: In an effort to ensure you have the resources and support that you need, and to facilitate clear and consistent communication, the Graduate Division will host a weekly Zoom meeting of all directors and administrators for the graduate programs. If you are unable to attend, feel free to forward the Outlook invitation to a colleague.

Basic needs: The Student Food Market will provide pre-packed bags of groceries for those students who have been using this service; the bags will be available at the usual pick-up locations at Parnassus and Mission Bay on Thursdays.

We strive to ensure educational continuity for our students under these extraordinary circumstances, while ensuring the health and safety of our community members and doing our part to limit COVID-19 transmission. In closing, let me pass on some advice we received:

- Use common sense and compassion
- Stay connected, just not too close
- Hang in there
- Wash your hands.

Yours in solidarity,

Liz and Liz

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